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What We Learned Adopting 4 children

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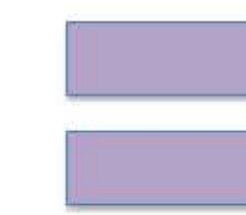
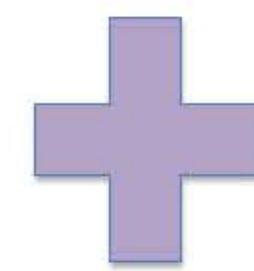
What We Learned Adopting 4 Children

Elizabeth, Christina, Carolyn, Katherine, and Joel Gardner

October, 2016 | joel.l.gardner@gmail.com

Introduction

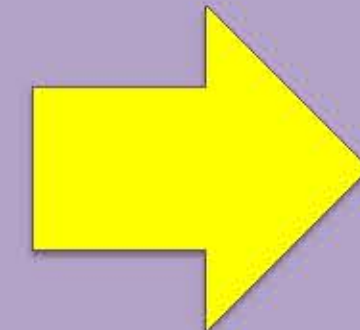
What happens when a family of three adopts four siblings? In this visual, interactive poster presentation, you will learn from the five oldest members of the Gardner family. We will share our experiences as birth child, adopted children, and adoptive parents. We will highlight what we have learned through this experience and share what we think you should do if you plan to adopt or are being adopted.



OUR PROCESS

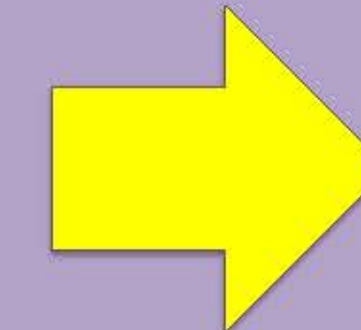
Decide

- Discussed a lot (8 years)
- Thoughtful, prayerful consideration
- Everyone has to be ready



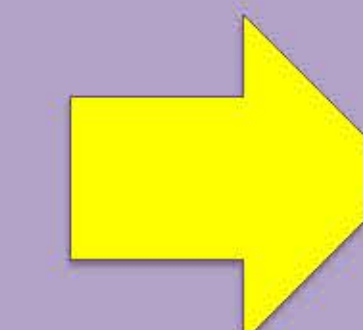
Prepare

- Take classes (\$)
- Learn from friends who adopted
- Do home study/ background checks, etc.
- Go through matching process
- Mad rush house preparation



Foster

- A household of 7 (crazy!!!)
- Lots of rules & regulations
- Many therapy/caseworker visits
- Parent sleep-deprivation
- New family traditions



Adopt

- Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork!
- Finalization at courthouse
- Relief!
- Go to Disneyworld
- Katie and Joel week-long vacation (sleep!)

Katie & Joel



What was it like? Hard. Exhausting. Exciting. Fulfilling. Maddening. Exhilarating. Emotional. Beautiful. Spiritual.
What did we learn? 5 kids is HARD. It is tough to be a nice parent – it is harder to be fun. Kids are expensive. Lots of kids are LOUD. A lot to learn. We love our family.
What should you do if you are going to adopt lots of kids? Have a good babysitter. Let your community support you. (Our church and family ☺). Take breaks (individually and as a couple) to recharge. Go to bed early. Have the older kids help. Maintain spirituality. Set new standards in many areas.

Carolyn



Birth-daughter Carolyn, 12 years old.

What was it like?

It was hard because Peter was mean to me.

What did I learn?

I learned that I can warm up to Lizzie, Peter, Aubrey, and Christina. I learned to share my mom and dad.

What should you do if you are going to adopt siblings?

Go through the adoption process.

Christina



Adoptive-daughter Christina, 10 years old.

What was it like?

Exciting, cool, extremely awesome, hard work but amazing, beautiful.

What did I learn?

People always have to get used to people before you judge them. You can have a happy life if you work hard and make good choices.

Trust your adoptive parents (or foster parents).

What should you do if you are going to be adopted?

Follow the rules (and eat the rolls :). Do the paperwork. Do not lie to the caseworker.

Lizzie



Adoptive-daughter Lizzie, 8 years old.

What was it like?

It felt good to be adopted. I feel the Holy Ghost in me.

What did I learn?

I learned how to have good manners at the dinner table.

I learned how to control my anger.

I learned that I have eternal parents who love me.

What should you do if you are going to be adopted?

The kids might have allergies. Do all the paperwork. Trust your adoptive parents.